



Sen. Joe Zarelli
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Committee Assignments

- Ways & Means, Ranking Republican
- International Trade & Economic Development
- Rules

The Election Reform Task Force will hold a public meeting in Vancouver next week. If you have time, I encourage you to attend.

Vancouver
Thursday, Feb. 10th
6:30 pm – 8:30 pm
Clark College Foster Auditorium

Help me save a stamp

If you would like to receive this update via e-mail, please let me know! I take the spending of tax dollars very seriously. While I believe it is important for you to have this information, I want to be sure I'm saving money when and where I can.

Sen. Joe Zarelli's

UPDATE FROM OLYMPIA

2/4/05

Dear Friends,

The work here in Olympia continues as we spend our days in committee holding public hearings on legislation. Committee work, constituent appointments, and meetings with economic development organizations keeps me extremely busy. But as my wife says, it keeps me out of trouble!

This week, the Washington State Supreme Court unanimously struck down the state's estate tax, commonly referred to as "the death tax." The Department of Revenue projects the fiscal impact for the next biennium (2005-07) in the neighborhood of \$431 million (\$152 million in refunds and \$278.8 million that will not be collected in 05-07)!

While this ruling is a good thing, as it will help protect family-owned businesses and farms, the near half-billion-dollar hit to state revenues makes it even more imperative that we get back to the Priorities of Government process our current governor has all but abandoned. Along with my Republican colleagues, I've been fiercely advocating a no-new-taxes budget that seems to fall on deaf ears with members on the other side of the aisle. You can be sure this decision by the state Supreme Court will only continue to fuel our insistence upon priorities – not taxes – as our solution to fiscal stability!

Also this week, the Senate Labor, Commerce, Research and Development Committee held a public hearing on legislation that says workers who have been employed for at least 17 weeks could qualify for up to five weeks of paid leave at \$250/week. This proposal, SB 5069, will cost approximately \$70 million a year and will be financed by employers.

With Washington state already having the highest minimum wage in the country at \$7.35 an hour (with annual inflation adjustments) and among the highest unemployment benefits, I am concerned we are placing too high a burden on small businesses. What are your thoughts? Do think mandating paid family leave is the right way to go for our state? I look forward to hearing from you!

As always, please contact my office with any concerns or questions.

Sincerely,

Sen. Joe Zarelli, 18th Legislative District

District Day – You are invited!

The 18th Legislative District Day will be held on Wednesday, March 23. The day will include a tour of the newly-refurbished Legislative Building, lunch (**bring your own brown-bag lunch**) with myself, Rep. Orcutt and Rep. Curtis, a tour of the Governor's Mansion and a tour of the Temple of Justice. We will start the day at 10:00 a.m. in the State Reception Room, located in the Legislative Building. Please contact my office if you plan on attending!